



City & Guilds NPTC Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Brush- Cutters and Trimmers (0014-41)

Version 1.1 (February 2026)

Assessment Pack – Candidate Version

Version and date	Change detail	Section
1.0 June 2025	First version	
1.1 February 2026	Unit number amendment	Contents, Practical Observation Descriptor Table, Appendix 1

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Introduction

This assessment relates to the unit in the Qualification handbook. The assessment can be achieved at pass only. If any task is not yet met the candidate is unsuccessful.

This assessment contains the following units and learning outcomes:

Unit 253 Trimmer and brush-cutter operations

1. Know how to carry out a risk assessment
2. Know the health and safety legislation that underpins trimmer and brush-cutter operations
3. Know the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for trimmer and brush-cutter operations
4. Know the health and safety features of the equipment being used
5. Know how to maintain the trimmer / brush-cutter
6. Know how to operate a trimmer / brush-cutter
7. Understand different operating techniques
8. Know how to store equipment safely and appropriately

Endorsement

The assessment may be taken on a machine with the following type of cutting mechanisms:

930 Trimmer

931 Brush-cutter

General guidance on the requirements for assessment can be found in the Assessor Guidance document available on the City & Guilds web site www.nptc.org.uk

The assessor must complete the Practical Table mark sheet for each candidate which should be kept by the assessor for a minimum period of twelve months.

This is not an open book assessment, however additional technical information may be sought from the relevant manufacture's operator manuals or any other appropriate training or safety publication.

Practical observation descriptor table

253 – Trimmer and brush-cutter operations

Activity number and description from check list		Assessment Criteria
1.1	Carry out a risk assessment relevant to the operation to identify significant hazards, those at risk, control measures and emergency procedures	Candidate is required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk the site and remove or mark hazards report to the appropriate person if the site condition is unsuitable and state why or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirm that the condition of the site is acceptable for the operation to take place set out warning signs position barriers to exclude public/animals (if appropriate) implement suitable controls to protect themselves state the emergency procedures in the event of an incident
		May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> contact with underground hazards flying debris bio hazards machine getting caught in vegetation kickback moving parts coming in contact with limbs
2.1	Describe the relevant health and safety legislation in relation to trimmer and brush-cutter operation	May include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 – specified duties under the act as an employee The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 – a risk assessment must be carried out for all activities Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992 – PPE must be supplied and worn Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 – avoid manual handling where possible, use safe lifting techniques The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 – to reduce the risk to health from vibrations Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 – requires that regular checks are made Noise at Work Regulations 2005 – hearing protection must be worn over 85db Countryside and Wildlife Act 1981 – operation carried out at times to minimise the impact on wildlife
3.1	Select the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Unless otherwise stated in the manufacturer’s handbook or operator’s manual, PPE should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> hard hat/helmet with visor face/eye protection

	for trimmer and brush-cutter operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ear defenders • non snag clothing • safety footwear
4.1	Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all moving/hot parts to be guarded as defined in the operator's handbook • blade guard (brushcutter) <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nylon guard and trimming knife (trimmer)
		<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the operator protection decals • bystander protection decals
		<p>To include all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on/off switch • choke • Operator Presence Control (OPC) • throttle • throttle lock • primer bulb • decompressor (if fitted)
		<p>Safety precautions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • risk assessment must be carried out before operation of the machine • PPE must be worn at all times • ensuring the safety of bystanders • a minimum safe working distance of 15 metres must be maintained at all times
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximum blade or head rotation speed as identified by manufacturer
5.1	Describe the preoperational checks that should be made to the trimmer/brush-cutter	<p>These may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inspecting the machine for damage (including the blade or nylon head) • checking that there is sufficient nylon cord (trimmer only) • inspecting the machine for loose components and fixings • checking the oil level (if applicable) • checking the fuel level • fuelling the machine (if required)
		<p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no smoking/naked flames • avoiding contact with hot surfaces • fuel topped up to correct level allowing for expansion • any spillage is dealt with using the correct method
5.2	Identify routine maintenance procedures for the trimmer/brush-cutter	<p>It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clean power unit and covers • service the air filter • service the spark plug • service the recoil starter mechanism • service fuel filter • check angle drive and gearbox • sharpen brushcutter blade <p>and /or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove trimmer head and refit new cord or nylon blades
		Power unit and covers:

5.3	Describe the procedures for maintaining the engine of the trimmer/brush-cutter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inspect for security and damage – damaged equipment should not be used external fixings present and secure debris removed from fins/air intake – allows for cooling of engine exhaust (muffler) is secure and intact – reduce noise and vibration
		<p>Service air filter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> air filter prevents debris from entering the carburettor and needs to be clean to maintain correct air/fuel ratio debris removed from around filter prior to removal filter removed (choke closed or protected) filter cleaned or new filter obtained (as appropriate) filter replaced and cover fitted
		<p>Service the spark plug:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> if fuel rich – deposits dark brown to black if fuel weak – deposits light brown to white engine cover and spark plug removed plug cleaned appropriately wear/damage assessed (replaced if necessary) <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gap size checked and set if necessary
		<p>Service starter recoil mechanism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when the spring is slack the cord does not fully retract over tight spring binds the cord before it can be fully extended recognise wear points; at base of toggle and where attached to pulley starter cover removed and ventilation slots cleaned cord inspected for wear cord and coil spring released and re-tensioned
		<p>Fuel filter (candidate required only to state how to service the fuel filter):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fuel cap to be removed filter to be located and removed from tank using an appropriate tool condition of the filter determined, replacement if necessary cleaning procedures include using non-flammable detergents followed by rinsing and drying
5.4	Describe the procedures for maintaining the cutting heads	<p>Angle drive and gearbox:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> access plug removed lubricant checked lubricant topped up (if appropriate)
		<p>Sharpen brushcutter blade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gloves worn when handling brushcutter blade remove blade guard secure blade using appropriate method (locking pin, spanner etc) loosen and remove retaining nut (L/H thread) remove blade assembly check the blade for length

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check the blade for damage • secure the blade for filing (any acceptable method used) • blade sharpened correctly (blade template used if appropriate) • blade balance checked • blade re-checked for cracks/damage • drive shaft and collar cleaned • blade refitted, washer and lock replaced securely
		<p>Remove trimmer head and refit new cord or nylon blades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secure nylon head using an appropriate method • remove retaining nut <p>Remove casing and comment on the condition of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • casing • ferrules • retaining nut <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • check cord or blades for damage • refit existing or new cord or blades (as appropriate) • refit nylon head • refit washer and nut and secure appropriately • nylon trimmed to recommended length
5.5	Describe the procedures for making adjustments to the trimmer/brush-cutter	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjusting the engine idling screw (if applicable) • adjusting the fuel mixture (if applicable)
		<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • handle bar adjustment as necessary • moving/adjusting harness connection point
		<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • length of shoulder straps • length of side straps • position of chest plate • position of hip guard • correct working height and balance achieved
6.1	Carry out pre-cutting tests	<p>To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove and retain guard (brushcutter) • correct starting procedure for the machine (on the ground) • start machine, check controls are fully operational • ensure blade or head is stationary at idling speed • machine stopped using on/off switch
6.2	Prepare the site to be cut	<p>May include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • authorities informed about the work prior to commencement • warning signs erected • high visibility clothing worn • an 'exclusion zone' could be set up • road or dual carriageway lane closed or coned off

7.1	Describe the different operating techniques for grassland and scrub	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scything technique • swatting technique (brushcutter) • direction of working to avoid clogging blade/head
7.2	Use appropriate operating techniques for the site being cut	To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe working distance maintained at all times • plan work efficiently • blade speed appropriate whist cutting • use legs and hips to work machine • cut vegetation using scything action • cut vegetation using swatting method • clear jammed blade safely (if occurs) • vegetation cleared to specification
		To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe working distance maintained at all times • plan work efficiently • nylon cutting cord/blade speed appropriate whist cutting • use legs and hips to work machine • cut vegetation using scything action • renew or replace nylon cord/blade as appropriate • clear jammed head safely (if occur) • damage to obstacles avoided • vegetation cleared to specification
8.1	Store equipment appropriately and in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines	May include, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevent corrosion • facilitate maintenance and adjustments • prevent personal contamination
		May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using appropriate PPE • removing unwanted residues using an appropriate method, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ compressed air ○ hose and water ○ brush • waste disposed in line with company policy, environmental good practice and any legislative requirements
		May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • machine inspected to establish if there are any missing, damaged or worn components • ensures that defects can be rectified before machine is required again for use

Appendix 1 Practical tables

253 – Trimmer and brush-cutter operations

Candidates are **not** permitted to use the checklist to work from when completing the practical tasks but may familiarise themselves with it prior to the observation. **All** criteria must be achieved.

Activity number and description		Achieved
1.1	Carry out a risk assessment relevant to the operation to identify significant hazards, those at risk, control measures and emergency procedures	
2.1	Describe the relevant health and safety legislation in relation to trimmer and brush-cutter operation	
3.1	Select the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for trimmer and brush-cutter operations	
4.1	Identify the Health and Safety features of the equipment being used	
5.1	Describe the preoperational checks that should be made to the trimmer/brush-cutter	
5.2	Identify routine maintenance procedures for the trimmer/brush-cutter	
5.3	Describe the procedures for maintaining the engine of the trimmer/brush-cutter	
5.4	Describe the procedures for maintaining the cutting heads	
5.5	Describe the procedures for making adjustments to the trimmer/brush-cutter	
6.1	Carry out pre-cutting tests	
6.2	Prepare the site to be cut	
7.1	Describe the different operating techniques for grassland and scrub	
7.2	Use appropriate operating techniques for the site being cut	
8.1	Store equipment appropriately and in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines	
Grade (P/X)		
Candidate signature and date		
Assessor signature and date		
Endorsement		
Assessor Feedback:		

Appendix 2 Sources of general information

The following documents contain essential information for centres delivering City & Guilds qualifications. They should be referred to in conjunction with this handbook. To download the documents and to find other useful documents, go to www.cityandguilds.com or click on the links below:

Centre handbook: quality assurance standards

This document is for all approved centres and provides guidance to support their delivery of our qualifications. It includes information on

- centre quality assurance criteria and monitoring activities
- administration and assessment systems
- centre-facing support teams at City & Guilds/ILM
- centre quality assurance roles and responsibilities.

The Centre Handbook should be used to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Centre Contract.

Centre assessment: quality assurance standards

This document sets out the minimum common quality assurance requirements for our regulated and non-regulated qualifications that feature centre assessed components. Specific guidance will also be included in relevant qualification handbooks and/or assessment documentation.

It incorporates our expectations for centre internal quality assurance and the external quality assurance methods we use to ensure that assessment standards are met and upheld. It also details the range of sanctions that may be put in place when centres do not comply with our requirements, or actions that will be taken to align centre marking/assessment to required standards. Additionally, it provides detailed guidance on the secure and valid administration of centre-assessments.

Access arrangements: when and how applications need to be made to City & Guilds

Provides full details of the arrangements that may be made to facilitate access to assessments and qualifications for candidates who are eligible for adjustments in assessment.

The **centre document library** also contains useful information on such things as:

- conducting examinations
- registering learners
- appeals and malpractice.

Useful contacts

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